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CHAPTER 2

Multilingualism: an effective learning and teaching strategy to enhance higher education curriculum practice

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Abstract

In response to a context laced with coloniality, this chapter presents a systematic review of higher education pre-service teachers' curricular and the role of multilingualism. The review is designed to carry out a critical exploration of the contribution multilingualism could make in shaping and enhancing learning and teaching strategies for pre-service teachers. The chapter uses the Population, Interest, Context (PICO) framework to generate data. Findings enable the chapter to unpack the benefits in the integration of multilingualism in higher education curricula. Following the PRISMA guidelines for article selection, the chapter elucidates specific strategies that are effective in higher education multilingual educational settings.

Keywords: multilingualism, pre-service teachers, Population Interest Context framework, adaptive curriculum design, linguistic diversity

2.1 Introduction

Following the previous chapter that focussed mainly on a pedagogical shift from teaching *the what of knowledge* to *the how of learning*, this chapter explores data that emerged from a systematic review of literature on higher education pre-service teachers' curricular and the role of multilingualism. The chapter presents the ability to communicate in multiple languages as not only being a valuable skill for pre-service teachers, but also a significant factor in fostering inclusive learning and teaching. Cummins (2021) defines Multilingualism as the ability to use more than one language to communicate effectively with different communities. In the context of the study reported in this chapter, Multilingualism is understood as the ability to integrate multiple languages into teaching, support linguistic backgrounds and improve the learning outcome of all learners.

Higher education is already undergoing a significant transformation that is driven by the increasing linguistic diversity of its staff and student populations (Miranda & Wahyudin, 2023). For this reason, Morea and Fisher (2023) assert that the impact of globalisation on educational systems worldwide necessitates a shift toward viewing multilingual realities of pre-service teachers as not something to accommodate, but instead as the reality that has always been in our classrooms but ignored. It is such observations that necessitated a study into the effects of multilingualism on learning and teaching strategies within university settings. Within a transforming and decolonising higher education context, the integration of multiple languages is no longer a mere trend to be accommodated, but a strategic shift toward democratising learning by creating more inclusive and diverse learning environments. As noted by Bessie (2023) and Miranda and Wahyudin (2023), this shift is redefining curriculum design and development, pedagogical practices

and assessment techniques to reflect the varied linguistic (and by implication cultural) backgrounds of all students.

This growing recognition of multilingualism's value in democratising learning and enhancing educational outcomes has led to a re-evaluation of teaching approaches by teacher educators (Niyibizi *et al.*, 2021). Studies by Makhalemele *et al.* (2018) and Bhatt *et al.* (2022) suggest that engaging with curriculum as praxis in the process of identifying content in multiple languages not only makes possible the deepening of pre-service teachers' understandings of the subject matter, but also fosters reflexivity, critical thinking, inclusivity, and a sense of belonging. This engagement with curriculum ensures enhanced engagement and pedagogical innovation and encourages educators to explore new teaching methods and technologies to meet the needs of a linguistically diverse student body. The positive correlation between multilingual education environments and academic success highlights the transformative potential of integrating multilingualism into the curriculum (Omodan, 2019).

2.2 Aim and Problem Statement

In the current landscape of higher education, institutions are confronted with the challenge to cater to a linguistically diverse student population. This diversity, a direct consequence of globalisation, brings to the fore the limitations of traditional monolingual teaching approaches that have dominated university settings for centuries (Makhalemele *et al.*, 2018). The long-standing existing educational paradigms on languages of learning and teaching often fall short of addressing the needs of pre-service teachers who come from varied linguistic backgrounds, thereby impacting their academic engagement, comprehension, and overall learning experiences (Bhatt, Badwan & Madiba, 2022). While there is a growing acknowledgement of the importance of linguistic inclusivity,

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the integration of multilingualism within the curriculum remains sporadic and inadequately supported by Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Consequently, a significant portion of the student body is left navigating an educational environment that does not fully recognise and/or leverage their linguistic capabilities, leading to potential barriers in their academic and professional progress (Morea & Fisher, 2023).

Ideally, HEIs should serve as vibrant, inclusive communities where linguistic diversity is not just accommodated, but recognised, celebrated and tangibly bolstered as a cornerstone of learning and teaching, and not just an afterthought. This is an important point for, as things currently stand, multilingualism does not appear to be seamlessly integrated into curriculum practices, reflecting the linguistic realities of the global community. When curriculum is viewed as praxis, the diverse languages 'naturally' get integrated not only to enhance the learning experience for pre-service teachers, but also to promote a deeper understanding and appreciation of, and respect for, cultural diversity among all students. Furthermore, by embedding multilingualism into the curriculum, institutions can foster innovative teaching strategies that are reflective of, and responsive to, the diverse needs of their student populations. The move towards such a multilingual framework is essential for preparing pre-service teachers to thrive in a fast-globalising world, equipped with the skills to navigate and contribute meaningfully to an increasingly fast diversifying educational context.

However, the transition to a more linguistically inclusive educational model is fraught with challenges. This manifests in the way the development of multilingual curriculum content is resisted. The preparation of educators to teach effectively in multilingual environments receives limited to no attention, and the establishment of a supportive institutional culture that values linguistic diversity often receives lip-service in most higher education contexts. The urgency with

which these omissions need to be attended to cannot be over-emphasised. This continued lack of recognition of the profound benefits multilingualism brings to the educational sphere continues to contribute to either a high attrition rate or the conferring of degrees to graduates that are underprepared for an already multilingual world of work. Benefits that get lost range from improved cognitive abilities and academic performance, to enhanced empathy and global awareness.

This failure to integrate multilingualism into higher education curricula not only undermines the potential of a significant portion of the student body, but also diminishes the capacity of educational institutions to foster truly global professionals and citizens. As such, solving this problem is crucial for breaking down linguistic barriers in education, promoting equity and inclusivity, and harnessing the full range of talents and perspectives that linguistically diverse pre-service teachers bring to the academic community.

2.2.1. The Population, Interest, Context (PICO) Framework

To explore the impact of multilingualism on learning and teaching strategies in higher education comprehensively, this review employs the Population, Interest, Context (PICO) framework. Cooke, Smith and Booth (2012) explain that the PICO framework is a tool used in qualitative research to structure and refine research questions and literature search strategies by focusing on three key elements:

- population (the group of people being studied);
- interest (the phenomenon or intervention being explored); and
- context (the setting or environment in which the study takes place).

Furthermore, Booth (2016) notes that this framework emerged from the evidence-based medicine movement in the early 1990s and was

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advocated by Dr David Sackett. Booth (2016) further asserts that it has been more commonly used in qualitative research settings, including fields such as education and social sciences, to assist in refining search strategies for literature reviews and in framing research questions. In the process, it considers the diverse population of higher education pre-service teachers and teacher educators, the interest in multilingual educational strategies, and the context of higher education institutions. The study reported in this chapter aimed to explore how multilingualism shapes educational practices and outcomes, providing valuable insights for educators and policymakers alike.

PICo Framework (Booth, 2016)

Population (P): Pre-service teachers in higher education.

Interest (I): Effects of the integration of multilingualism within the curriculum practice in higher education.

Context (Co): Institutions of higher learning.

Research Question

How does the integration of multilingualism in higher education curriculum influence the development and effectiveness of learning and teaching strategies?

2.2.2. Current understandings on Multilingualism

Current research findings indicate an understanding that the shift toward multilingual education compels teacher educators to rethink and modify their teaching approaches to cater to the diverse backgrounds of pre-service teachers (Makhalemele, Mayimele & Ngoaketsi, 2018; Bhatt, Badwan & Madiba, 2022; Peercy, Tigert & Fredricks, 2023). Some scholars, furthermore, have attempted to demonstrate the extent to which multilingualism in higher education can enhance educational

outcomes significantly (Mbirimi-Hungwe, 2023; Ngcobo & Makumane, 2023; Tshuma & Theledi, 2023). In this regard, Makhalemele *et al.* (2018) have been instrumental in developing the understanding that pre-service teachers who engage with curriculum content in multiple languages often develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter and exhibit improved critical thinking skills. Furthermore, their work also shows that multilingual education environments foster a stronger sense of belonging and inclusion among pre-service teachers from various linguistic backgrounds, contributing to their overall academic success and well-being.

In terms of teacher education more specifically, studies reveal that multilingualism also plays a crucial role in pre-service teacher engagement and pedagogical innovations. Among other things, other studies reveal that teacher educators who utilise multilingual strategies in their teaching, often find that pre-service teachers are more engaged and motivated (Paetsch *et al.*, 2023). This engagement stems from pre-service teachers' ability to connect with the material in a language in which they are comfortable, leading to a more meaningful and personalised learning experience. Moreover, Barros *et al.* (2021) explain why there is a need to cater to a multilingual pre-service teacher population in teacher education. They thus further argue that it inspires and drives educators to innovate and to experiment with new teaching methods and educational technologies.

While the benefits of multilingualism in higher education are clear, implementing effective multilingual strategies comes with its set of challenges. Mgqwashu (2013) states that these challenges include:

- developing curriculum content that is accessible in multiple languages;
- training educators to teach in a multilingual environment; and,

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- ensuring that linguistic diversity is supported and valued within the institution.

Overcoming these challenges is crucial for the successful integration of multilingualism in curriculum practice in higher education. Van Wyk and Tshelane (2016) describe curriculum practice in higher education as a process that involves the planning, execution and evaluation of educational programs and courses. These practices determine what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed, reflecting the academic standards and goals of an institution.

2.3 Conceptual lens

Multilingualism as a conceptual framework guided the discussions and analysis in this chapter. It encapsulates ideas beyond the ability to speak multiple languages, but extends to a broader understanding of cultural diversity, communication patterns, and educational inclusivity (Makalela, 2016). Thus, for multilingualism, being proficient in multiple languages enhances cognitive flexibility, broadens cultural understanding, and improves communication skills (Backus *et al.*, 2013).

Cummin (2021) opines that the relevance of multilingualism in higher education can be traced back to two key factors. Firstly, the rise of global mobility has led to more linguistically diverse pre-service teacher populations. This diversity presents challenges as well as opportunities for educational institutions to rethink their teaching and curriculum development strategies and choices. Secondly, a growing recognition exists that multilingual competencies are valuable assets in the global job market, pushing universities to integrate language diversity into their curriculum as praxis.

2.3.1. Multilingualism and Relevance

To achieve the purposes of this chapter, both multilingualism and relevance were used to analyse the findings in this study. Both concepts made it possible for the study to reveal the multifaceted benefits of multilingualism in higher education. Andleeb, Asgher & Zimi (2023) have highlighted how multilingualism is linked to cognitive benefits. These include enhanced problem-solving skills and greater mental flexibility. Both skills are presented as crucial in higher education settings, a context characterised by complexity, with critical thinking as being paramount to academic success. It is for this reason that multilingual pre-service teachers may have a distinct advantage in these areas. Amongst other things, it influences how pre-service teachers engage with, and benefit from, educational content.

Building on the cognitive advantages, multilingualism also fosters cultural awareness and sensitivity. In environments where pre-service teachers come from a myriad of backgrounds, cultural competence becomes essential, as noted by Thamaga-Chitja and Mbatha (2012). This competence facilitates better communication and understanding among pre-service teachers and academic staff, cultivating a more inclusive and harmonious learning environment.

The necessity for innovation in teaching strategies as part of an understanding of curriculum as praxis emerges as another significant aspect. Thus, recognising the varied linguistic backgrounds of pre-service teachers compels the development of more inclusive curricular with a focus on ensuring that teaching strategies are effective and fit-for-purpose, as argued by Subban and Mahlo (2017). Curricular design tends to include the deployment of bilingual and/or multilingual instruction, culturally responsive teaching, and integrating technology to support language learning, ensuring that all students can fully engage with the curriculum.

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Moreover, the improvement of communication skills stands out as a critical benefit of multilingualism. According to Rubtsova (2020) multilingualism enhances the ability of pre-service teachers and educators to express ideas more clearly and understand others' cultural perspectives deeply. This enhanced communication is indispensable in fostering collaborative learning, facilitating research projects, and engaging in academic discourse. Through these linked benefits, multilingualism enriches the educational experience significantly, preparing students for a more interconnected and diverse world.

2.4 Methodology and Design

To generate data, this chapter adopted a qualitative research methodology. This choice was motivated by its ability to explore complex phenomena within their contexts and allows for an in-depth exploration of how multilingualism impacts learning and teaching strategies in higher education. This approach was conducive to understanding the experiences of pre-service teachers and teacher educators in a multilingual academic environment.

The qualitative methodology in this study involved a comprehensive review and analysis of existing literature and qualitative data sources. This included academic articles, case studies, and institutional reports that provided insights into the integration and effects of multilingualism in higher education. The focus was on gathering rich, descriptive data that highlighted the experiences, perceptions and practices related to multilingualism in learning and teaching contexts.

2.4.1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The review focused on peer-reviewed academic articles, case studies, and institutional reports that specifically addressed multilingualism in higher education, particularly those concerning pre-service teachers,

teacher educators, curriculum practice, and language of learning and teaching in higher education. Preference was given to publications in English or those with English translations, ideally published within the last decade (2013 –2023). This approach ensured the relevance and currency of the data. Studies from diverse global contexts were included to provide a comprehensive understanding. Conversely, the review excluded non-peer-reviewed sources, such as blogs or opinion pieces, and studies irrelevant to multilingualism in higher education, such as those focusing exclusively on primary or secondary education. To maintain a focus on current, practical insights, studies reporting on research older than 10 years and non-empirical theoretical papers were also excluded.

2.4.2. Search strategy and terms

The search was conducted across multiple databases, including ERIC, Google Scholar, ProQuest, ASTM’s Digital Library, EBSCOhost, and Web of Science. Key search terms included combinations of 'multilingualism', 'bilingual education', 'higher education', 'pre-service teachers', 'teaching strategies', 'language diversity', 'curriculum development', and 'linguistic inclusion'. These terms were used in various strings such as "Multilingualism AND higher education" to maximise the breadth and relevance of the search results. The review also involved hand-searching the references of selected articles and consulting experts in the field for key studies and/or reports, as portrayed in Figure 2.1 below:

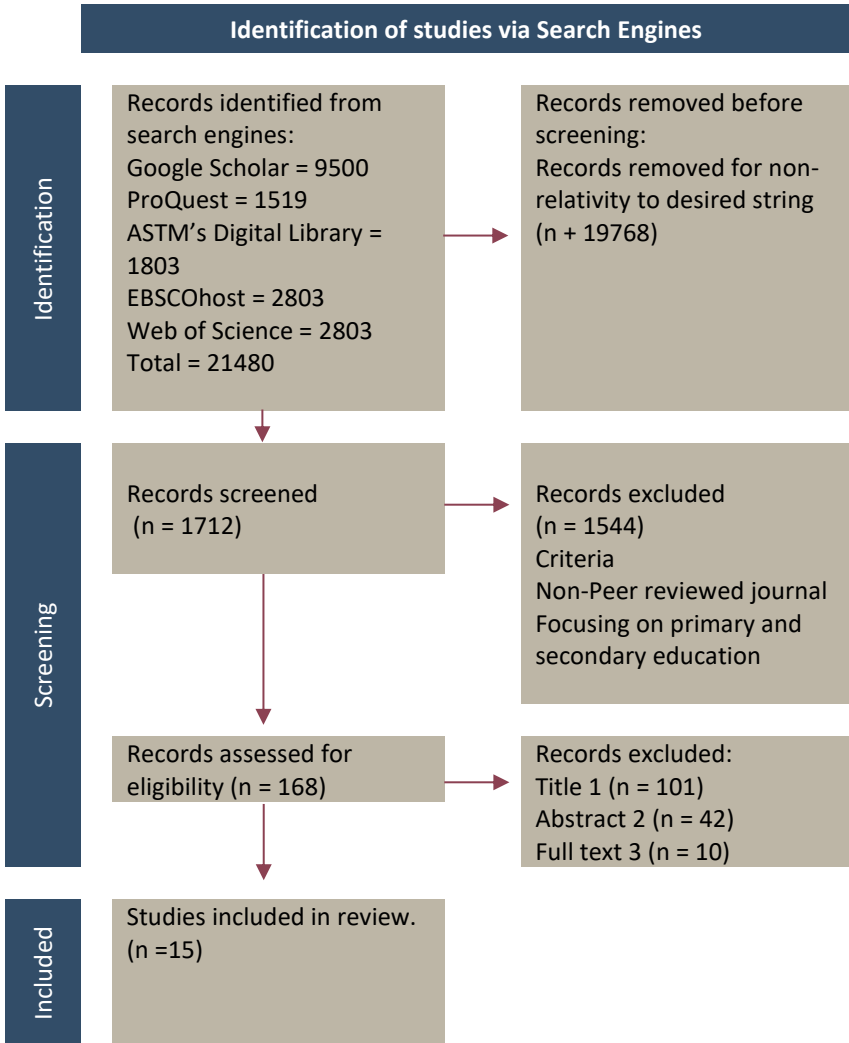


Figure 2.1: PRISMA flow diagram (Parums, 2021):

2.4.3. Ethical considerations in literature review

While conducting a comprehensive literature review, as presented in this chapter, it is important to acknowledge that such an endeavour, though devoid of primary empirical data collection and direct human

subject participation, still operates within an ethical framework (Davies, 2020). Proferes *et al.* (2021) recount that the lack of requirements for obtaining formal ethical approval due to the nature of the review does not diminish the necessity of adhering to ethical standards. Given the nature of a literature review, there was no necessity for an application for ethical clearance (Suri, 2020).

Despite formal ethical application processes, this chapter presents significant findings. The insights garnered from the extensive review of literature not only contribute to the academic discourse on the subject under discussion, but also offer valuable perspectives for practitioners and policymakers in the field. The synthesis of existing literature conducted with a commitment to ethical research practices highlights the importance of multilingualism in higher education and its impact on learning and teaching strategies. This comprehensive review serves as testament to the fact that scholarly work, even in the absence of primary data or external funding, can yield important contributions to our understanding of complex educational phenomena.

2.4.4. Data analysis

In analysing the qualitative data generated from the comprehensive review of literature on multilingualism in higher education, a thematic analysis approach was employed. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (Booth, 2016). The choice of thematic analysis as the analytical strategy for this study was driven by its suitability for exploring the nuanced impacts of multilingualism on higher education's teaching and learning strategies. This method allowed for an in-depth examination of qualitative data, facilitating the identification and interpretation of key themes related to multilingualism's role in educational contexts. It provided a structured approach to organise and describe the data, while also offering the flexibility to capture the complex experiences of pre-

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service teachers and their educators. Through thematic analysis, the study highlighted the multifaceted benefits and challenges of multilingualism effectively, offering valuable insights into its implications for pedagogical innovation and inclusivity in higher education.

2.5 Results and discussion

In this section, we explore a comprehensive examination of 15 selected articles by applying Thematic Analysis as our principal tool of inquiry. This analytical approach was uniquely tailored to view these articles through the lens of multiculturalism theory, a perspective crucial for understanding the intricate dynamics of multilingualism in higher education. The relevance of each article to the overarching themes of this chapter was meticulously investigated using themes, enabling us to reveal the deeper implications and insights they offer. This process not only highlighted the varied dimensions of multilingual education, but also illuminated how multiculturalism shapes and is shaped by the discourses within academic literature. It is against these observations that the ensuing analysis presents a detailed exploration of these articles, unfolding their significance in contributing to our understanding of multilingual practices in diverse educational settings, as reflected in Table 2.1 below:

Table 2.1: Summary of articles:

Author/s	Article/s summary
Lasagabaster, Cots and Mancho-Barés (2013)	The article discusses how multilingualism in higher education increases linguistic diversity and the interplay between minority and mainstream languages.
Mgqwashu (2013)	The study addresses questions of linguistic and cultural relevance in knowledge production and considers the implications of using isiZulu in postgraduate education, particularly for postgraduate pre-service teachers.

Yildiz and Scharaldi (2014)	This article discusses using mobile technologies to develop a multicultural and multilingual curriculum, integrating various subjects for inclusive instruction
Preece (2015)	This research explores how multilingualism in higher education impacts students' academic language knowledge and experience, affecting their relationship with academic language.
Van Rooy and Coetzee-Van Rooy (2015)	This research finds that multilingualism in South African higher education is positively related to cognitive development and plays a crucial role in academic success.
Catalano and Hamann (2016)	This article asserts that multilingual education can be successful if language teaching is restructured towards multilingual norms
Mphasha (2016)	The article also highlights the deep connection between language and culture, suggesting that neglecting African languages in education could erode the social identity of their speakers as South Africans.
Guarda and Helm (2017)	The study explores how language shift in higher education leads to new teaching approaches and increased awareness of student needs, potentially leading to pedagogical innovation
Palfreyman and Van der Walt (2017)	The study highlights strategies and practices of successful bilingual students in South African higher education, exploiting their bilingual proficiency in multilingual contexts.
Mayaba, Ralarala and Angu (2018)	It suggests that the current language policies in higher education perpetuate power imbalances and inequalities, limiting students' access to knowledge and their ability to engage deeply with academic content. This linguistic reality poses a challenge to students' academic performance and their ability to make meaningful connections with the learned material.
Pawlak and Kiermasz (2018)	The research investigates how multilingualism impacts language learning strategies, noting higher strategy use in a second language compared to a third language, mainly influenced by proficiency levels and motivation

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Romero and Shivers-Mcnaair (2018)	This paper discusses how multilingual students can develop critical frameworks to challenge and change normative constructions within their disciplines by using teaching and learning strategies that resist erasure
Dimova and Kling (2020)	This article discusses opportunities in higher education to offer instruction in multiple languages, influencing language policies and practices. It highlights the need for integrating content and language in multilingual universities.
Tondi and Fredericks (2020)	This article offers a critical perspective on the role of language in shaping knowledge systems, particularly in the context of higher education in Africa.
Mgqwashu (2023)	The paper emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse learning needs and backgrounds of students, especially in a post-merger and decolonizing educational context.

2.5.1. Thematic analysis of the summary of articles

Pedagogical Innovation through linguistic diversity

Guarda and Helm's (2017) research highlights the transformative role of multilingualism in higher education. Their study reveals how integrating diverse languages in teaching not only caters to varied student demographics but also drives educators to innovate pedagogically. This aligns with multilingualism, suggesting that linguistic diversity acts as a catalyst for educational innovation. The study directly responds to the research question by showcasing the influence of multilingualism on the development of more inclusive and effective teaching strategies, reflecting the 'Interest' aspect of the PICO framework.

Cognitive advantages of multilingualism

Pawlak and Kiermasz's (2018) study highlights the cognitive benefits of multilingualism in language learning strategies, particularly noting the differences in strategy use across second and third languages. The

research supports the theory that multilingualism enhances mental flexibility and problem-solving skills. By illustrating the impact of multilingualism on language learning strategies in higher education, particularly among foreign language majors, Pawlak and Kiermasz's work contributes to addressing the 'Population' component of the PICO framework.

Challenges and opportunities of linguistic diversity

Lasagabaster, Cots and Mancho-Barés (2013) explore the challenges and tensions arising from linguistic diversity in higher education. Their study reflects on the complex interaction between minority and mainstream languages, resonating with the theory that linguistic diversity presents opportunities as well as challenges. This study responds to the research question by examining the implementation difficulties of multilingual strategies, addressing the 'Context' aspect of the PICO framework.

Technology in Multilingual Education

Yildiz and Scharaldi's (2014) research focuses on the integration of mobile technologies in multicultural and multilingual education, demonstrating how technology can support multilingual learning and teaching. This approach is in line with the multilingualism theory, which emphasises innovative tools in language acquisition. Yildiz and Scharaldi's work adds to the research question by showcasing effective strategies for incorporating multilingualism in higher education, particularly in terms of 'Population' and 'Interest'.

Empowering Multilingual students

Romero and Shivers-McNair (2018) investigate how multilingual students use their language skills to transform academic practices. Their findings illustrate the empowering effect of language proficiency, as predicted by multilingualism, in enabling students to critically engage with their learning environments. This study addresses the 'Interest'

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component of the PICO framework, highlighting the development of critical and resistant learning and teaching strategies facilitated by multilingualism.

Advocacy for Inclusive language policies

Mayaba, Ralarala and Angu (2018) argue for a re-evaluation of the role of language in education, advocating for a curriculum that is more inclusive of African languages. This inclusion is seen as a critical step towards social justice and a decolonised educational system. It proposes that student voices should be at the forefront of driving changes in language policies, emphasising the need for a curriculum practice that recognises and values students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The discussion highlights the necessity of multilingualism in higher education, not only for cultural identity but also as a means for academic engagement and critical thinking, aligning with the principles of critical pedagogy. The article calls for a shift in perspective, recognising the importance of multilingualism as a core skill for students, essential for fostering a more equitable and inclusive educational environment.

Addressing language challenges in higher education

The paper by Mgqwashu (2013) discusses the challenges isiZulu-speaking pre-service teachers face in an English-dominant higher education system. It emphasises the need for developing isiZulu's academic discourse for effective integration into higher education. The paper further asserts that this is crucial for enabling isiZulu-speaking pre-service teachers to engage comprehensively with their studies. The article aligns with the theme of enhancing learning and teaching strategies through multilingualism in higher education, providing insights into the challenges and opportunities of incorporating Indigenous languages such as isiZulu in academic settings. This supports the exploration of multilingualism to improve educational outcomes and promote cultural inclusivity.

2.5.2. Theoretical Implications

Multilingualism as a catalyst for pedagogical innovation

Guarda and Helm (2017) and Dimova and Kling (2020) underscore the dynamic nature of multilingualism in reshaping educational approaches. They indicate that multilingualism not only diversifies the linguistic landscape of higher education but also serves as a key driver for pedagogical change, encouraging educators to rethink their instructional methodologies and adopt more flexible, responsive approaches to teaching.

Yildiz and Scharaldi (2014) and Ngubane and Ntombela (2020) argue that the exploration of technology in multilingual settings extends the conversation by illustrating how digital tools can bridge linguistic gaps and foster inclusive learning environments. This reveals a synergistic relationship between multilingualism and technological innovation, suggesting that the effective integration of technology in education can amplify the benefits of multilingual approaches.

Cognitive and cultural Implications of Multilingualism

Pawlak and Kiermasz (2018) discern the cognitive advantages associated with multilingualism, such as improved memory, better multitasking abilities, and enhanced creative thinking. They highlight that multilingual education not only improves language proficiency but also contributes to overall cognitive development, underscoring the broad educational impacts of multilingual approaches.

Cultural analysis from Mayaba, Ralarala and Angu (2018) and Mgwashu (2014) emphasise the role of multilingualism in cultivating cultural awareness and empathy among students. They suggest that multilingual education not only imparts linguistic skills but also fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity, preparing students for a globalised world.

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Challenges and tensions in Multilingual settings

Lasagabaster, Cots and Mancho-Barés (2013) bring to light the practical challenges of implementing multilingualism in higher education, such as resource allocation, language policy conflicts, and balancing the needs of diverse linguistic groups. They highlight the complexities involved in managing linguistic diversity within academic institutions. Insights from Preece (2015) provide an in-depth look at the struggles students encounter in multilingual academic settings, especially those from linguistically diverse backgrounds. These insights point to the need for more supportive structures and resources to help students navigate the challenges of multilingualism, emphasising the gap between idealised policy and real-world implementation.

Multilingualism and learning-centred curriculum practice

Glukhova and Sorokina (2018); Kasmer and Billings (2017) and Mgwqwashu (2023), collectively illustrate how multilingualism can be leveraged to create more learning-centred curriculum practice experiences. They further argue that when students are allowed to engage with content in their preferred languages, their motivation and engagement increase, leading to a more effective and enjoyable learning process. These studies suggest that student-centred learning in multilingual contexts not only addresses linguistic needs but also acknowledges the individual learning styles and preferences of students, leading to more personalised and effective education.

Institutional policies and Multilingual education models

Tondi and Fredericks (2020) highlight the need for educational institutions to rethink their language policies and embrace multilingual educational models. They underscore the importance of institutional support in the successful implementation of multilingual strategies, suggesting that without top-down support, such initiatives may struggle to gain traction. It aligns with the themes of the systemic review by

emphasising the importance of multilingualism and cultural diversity in academic settings. The article's focus on decolonising knowledge and valuing Indigenous languages resonates with the discourse on enhancing learning and teaching strategies through multilingualism in higher education.

Further considerations from Mphasha (2016) and Subban and Mahlo (2017) argue for the necessity of careful planning and policy development to foster multilingual learning environments. They emphasise that effective multilingual education requires a strategic approach that considers the linguistic diversity of the student population and the institutional capacity to support such diversity.

Teacher educator perspectives

Subban and Mahlo (2017) further reveal diverse attitudes of pre-service teachers towards multilingualism, ranging from enthusiastic support to apprehension. They highlight the need for professional development and training to equip pre-service teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to teach in multilingual settings effectively. The articles indicate that educator beliefs and competencies play a crucial role in the success of multilingual education strategies. They suggest that by enhancing educators' understanding and appreciation of multilingualism, institutions can foster a more supportive and effective learning environment for all learners.

2.6 Strategies and limitations

2.6.1. Strategies for implementing Multilingualism

Several teaching and learning strategies for enhancing Multilingualism in higher education emerge from this chapter:

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- Develop a curriculum framework that supports multilingualism, including bilingual or multilingual course offerings and materials that cater to diverse linguistic backgrounds.
- Provide professional development opportunities for educators to learn about and implement inclusive, multilingual pedagogies.
- Incorporate language learning strategies within subject teaching, emphasizing the development of language skills and subject matter expertise alike.
- Formulate and implement clear language policies that recognize and support the use of multiple languages in academic settings.
- Utilize technology and digital platforms to create adaptable learning environments that can cater to a range of linguistic preferences.
- Allocate resources for research on multilingual education and disseminate findings to inform policy and practice.
- Establish forums, workshops, and discussion groups where multilingualism is promoted, and experiences are shared and celebrated.
- By adopting these strategies, higher education institutions can significantly enhance their curriculum practice and teaching methodologies significantly through multilingualism. Such initiatives not only benefit the linguistic development of pre-service teachers but also contribute to a more inclusive, culturally rich, and intellectually stimulating educational environment.

2.6.2. Limitations to the implementation of Multilingualism

The review acknowledges potential limitations such as language bias, given the focus on English publications, and publication bias, where grey literature or emerging research might have been overlooked. Geographical limitations may also have arisen. This systematic literature review excluded studies published before 2013 and those conducted outside South Africa. Furthermore, the review only considered studies in higher education and excluded primary and secondary education, which restricted the applicability of the findings to other teaching environments. Moreover, only English-language studies were included, and the language of the studies may have limited the scope of the review. Studies using qualitative methods may have been more highly represented in the findings than those using quantitative methods. Finally, owing to time restrictions, only a small number of databases were searched for pertinent studies. Despite these drawbacks, this systematic literature review offers a thorough summary of the state of advancement in research on the integration of multilingualism in higher education.

2.7 Concluding thoughts

The most interesting fact is that thematic analysis, through the lens of the multilingualism theory, reveals that the majority of the studies affirmatively respond to the research question. *They collectively illustrate how multilingualism influences the development and effectiveness of learning and teaching in higher education.* These publications highlight the benefits, challenges, and innovative approaches associated with multilingualism, emphasizing its significance in shaping contemporary curriculum practice.

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This exploration of multilingualism in higher education highlights its pivotal role in shaping contemporary educational landscapes. The analysis of diverse studies highlights that integrating multilingual approaches in higher education not only enhances learning and teaching strategies but also contributes to the cognitive and cultural development of pre-service teachers. Effective teaching and learning strategies involve the deliberate use of instructional methods that actively engage students, foster critical thinking, and adapt to diverse learning needs, ultimately enhancing students' understanding, retention, and application of knowledge. Multilingualism fosters a more inclusive and dynamic learning environment, accommodating the diverse linguistic backgrounds of pre-service teachers and promoting global interconnectivity. The challenges associated with implementing multilingual strategies, such as policy barriers and the need for pedagogical innovation, are significant yet surmountable obstacles that can be addressed through institutional commitment and strategic planning.

Clear emphasis is emerging from this review that multilingualism is not merely an educational choice, but a necessity in the increasingly interconnected world of higher education. Its integration into learning and teaching strategies is key to preparing pre-service teachers for the complexities of the global landscape. As higher education institutions continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by linguistic diversity, the strategies and insights discussed in this chapter offer valuable guidance. Embracing multilingualism in higher education is an investment in a more inclusive, effective, and culturally rich future for global education. Furthermore, investing in research and embracing technological advancements are crucial for advancing multilingualism.

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